Tapes Show LBJ Doubted Same Bullet Hit Kennedy, Connally

From Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Even while the Warren Commission was preparing its report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, there were disagreements over whether the same bullet had struck Kennedy and John B. Connally. Among the dissenters: President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Besides, Johnson asked Warren Commission member Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.), "what difference does it make which bullet got Connally?"

Arguments over the same-bullet theory continue more than 30 years after the attack in which Kennedy was killed and Connally, then the governor of Texas, was wounded.

Johnson's conversation with Russell was included among tapes released Friday by the National Archives and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin, Tex.

The tapes reviewed in Austin disclosed that Connally called Johnson on March 2, 1967, to discuss claims that Cuba was involved in the assassination. In other phone conversations, Johnson told aides to keep up with New Orleans prosecutor Jim Garrison's investigation into the slaying.

Garrison's theories and writings about the assassination formed the basis for Oliver Stone's 1991 movie, "JFK."

Johnson, however, said he did not believe the CIA-Cuba theory. In a Feb. 18, 1967, conversation with then-acting Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, Johnson said the Cuban theory was as preposterous as if he were told that his wife, Lady Bird Johnson, "was taking dope."

Johnson's conversation with Russell, about the bullet that hit Connally, occurred on Sept. 18, 1964. They discussed progress in preparing the report on Kennedy's slaying.

The senator noted some members of the commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren believed that "the same bullet that hit Kennedy first is the one that hit Connally."

Responding to Johnson's musing, Russell said, "Well, it don't make much difference." He added: "Well, I don't believe it."

"I don't either," Johnson responded.

Connally, riding in the front seat of the presidential limousine, was wounded when Kennedy, in the back seat, was slain in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Investigators agree that three shots were fired, but through the years conspiracy arguments have turned on whether the same bullet could have passed through Kennedy's upper back and hit Connally.

The two were struck almost at the same instant. If the same bullet could not have wounded both men, there had to have been a second bullet—and therefore a second gunman, according to those who believe in a conspiracy.